UMI

Imprimatur.

Liber cui Titulus [A Sermon concerning Discretion in Giving Alms.]

April. 24. 1688.

Guil. Needham RR. in Christo Patri ac D. D. Wilhelmo Archiep. Cant. a Sacr. Domest.

MICROFILMED – 1980

UMI

A SERMON Concerning DISCRETION IN GIVING ALMS.

PREACHED

At St. *Sepulchres* Church in *London*, instead of the *Spital*, upon *Wednesday* in *Easter*-Week, *April* vi. M DC LXXXI.

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The Second Edition.

LONDON,
Printed for Richard Chiswell, at the *Rose* and *Crown* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, M.DC.LXXXVIII.

PSAL. cxii. part of verſe 5.

A Good man——will guide his Affairs with Diſcretion.

PRudence (if we diſcourſe concerning it with propriety) is not ſo much a diſtinct and particular Virtue, as the *common Governeſs* of all the Virtues. It conſidereth the *ſcope* at which we aim; it chuſeth honeſt and uſeful *Means*, and fitteth them to their end; it conducteth them, in due manner, in their operation; it adjuſteth all the circumſtances of humane life.

It is true, there may be ſomething done without it which is, in its nature, *good*: but, even then, it cannot be ſaid to be performed *well* and correctly, and with the approbation of right reaſon. For to affirm that *chance*

is wise, is to say most absurdly of it, that it is not it self.

The useful influence of *Discretion* appeareth, plainly, in all the Affairs of a Christian Man. But I shall only give an instance of it in the exercise of Charity; whether it be when we use *Reproof*, or administer *Alms*.

In using of Reproof, it is *Discretion* which sheweth *what Arcana* of Vice are unfit to be exposed; at *what seasons* Men in fault are in the fittest temper for Advice; *what* are those *happy hours* in which they are softest, and most receptive of any virtuous impression; by *what steps* and degrees we ought to proceed; *when* we are to favour the modesty, or to dash the confidence, of Offenders; *how* we ought to proportion the degree of our Passion to the quality of the Offence; lest, by equal vehemence against infirmity and presumption, we hinder the ignorant from discerning whether the crime be venial, or unworthy of favour.

Then, *in the Administration of Alms*, we are guilty of unprofitable (not to say,

say, very injurious) profuseness, whensoever *Prudence* is not the *dispenser* of them. Alms are call'd, in *Holy writ*, by the venerable Name of Religious *Offerings*. But, whatsoever the Altar be at which they are presented without *Discretion*, they are so many *Sacrifices without Salt*. Wherefore, in the Text, *Charity* and *Prudence* meet together in this excellent character of a bountiful Person; *A good Man* [*sheweth favour, and lendeth, and*] *will guide his Affairs with Discretion.*

You perceive, by this Introduction, what is like to be my present Argument, that particular one *of Discretion in giving Alms*, and not that of Charity in general, in praise of which so much hath been, already, said by others, and so very accurately; that they have, in effect, exhausted the subject.

And, indeed, it appears to every judicious Christian so excellent and so necessary a duty; that it is difficult for such a one to prevent amazement when he hears it put in form of Query by the *Schools*, *Whether or no Charity*

*T. Aquin. Sum. 2ª 2æ q. 23. Art. 3. utrum Charitas sit Virtus?

Charity be a Virtue? I mean this of such a Man as is not well acquainted with their usual way of tying knots upon the plainest things, to shew their dexterity in the solution.

Now, in pursuance of my intended subject, I shall,

In the first place, inquire who that *good Man* is who is described in the Text, as a person, at the same time *wise*, and *liberal*.

Secondly, I shall show, in general, that *Bounty* ought, evermore, to be govern'd by *Discretion*.

Thirdly, I shall lay, before your consideration, those particular measures of Religious Prudence by which a Man, truly and wisely Charitable, does *guide his Affairs*.

Fourthly, I shall earnestly move this Audience (if need there be of importunity in so good a cause and in a Christian Assembly) both to *Charity* it self, and to the *Prudence* of its

Lastly,

Lastly, Under this Exhortation, I shall direct to such *means* as are proper to be used towards the attainment of this great perfection of discreet and rational Bounty.

And all this, to the intent that they whom God hath prosper'd, may be perswaded both to *communicate*, and to do it in such prudent and profitable manner; that the Providence of God may be glorify'd by man's wise and good management of its liberality to him; that the publick Needs may be the more conveniently supply'd; and that men of equal Discretion and Charity may *lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, and, at length, lay hold of eternal life.*

I am (by the order I have prescrib'd to my self) to inquire, in

The first place, Who that *good Man* is, in commendation of whose Charity and prudence, not only the Text, but this whole Psalm, is penn'd. And it is manifest by these following words [*he sheweth favour and lendeth*] that by such a one is meant, a Man of gentle

tle temper and generous disposition; a Man neither *rigid* nor *selfish*: one to whom belong the good qualities of the Zone we live in, which is temperate and fruitful. So that this kind of *Goodness* consisteth in two very valuable things, *sweetness of nature, and largeness of heart.* And both these generally go together. For it is with the Soul of Man as it is with the parts of matter, which, the lesser they are, they are always the harder, and the more inflexible.

And, First, This *Good Man* excelleth in sweetness and goodness of Nature. By which I mean not that easiness of temper which renders him apt to be seduced, but that humanity of disposition which prepares him with inclination to do good. The Hebrew word which, in our Translation, is rendred [*a good Man*] is, in that of the *Seventy*, interpreted by χρηστὸς which signifies *gentle and benign*. And *Phavorinus* † glosseth this Greek word by that other of ἐπιεικὴς, equitable, clement, void of rigour, humane, merciful.

† Phav. Lex. p. 1874. χρηστὸς ---ὁ ἐπιεικὴς.--- χρηστότης -- -- ἡ συμπαθὴς χάρις.

Secondly,

Secondly, This *Good Man* excelleth in largeness of heart. *Vir bonus* is, here, *Vir utilis*. A Good Man is a Man useful to his Generation. In this sense the Law is said * to be, not only *holy* [or a Rule separate from the immoral measures which the World lives by] and *just* [that is, a Rule of right reason] but *Good* also; that is, a Rule useful and serviceable to all who follow it. A Good Man is not injurious, nor so much as rigorously just; but (like the best of Beings of whom *Plato* said, that there was no Envy or narrowness in him) diffusive of good will and favour towards all mankind. He is One who do's † τι *περισσον*, some excellent thing; something more generously good than others, who (like the Publicans) are wont rather to *exchange*, than to *do*, good Turns. When the *Jews* personate such a one, they introduce him speaking in this proverb: *That which is thine is, for me, still thy property; and that which is mine is thine also.* This is He for whom some other Man of an upright intention, but of much meaner capacity to serve his Age, would (as S. *Paul* * observeth)

* Rom. 7. 12.

† S. Matt. 5. 47.

* Rom. 5. 7.

serveth) *even dare to die*. And certainly he who, when there is apparent hazard, sacrificeth his own less profitable life, to preserve the more useful one of some *light of Israel*, some Man who is a common and publick Good, some *Hero* in generous Virtue; can never fall an inglorious Victim in the Eyes of God or any virtuous Beholder.

Having, thus, shew'd you who this *Good Man* is who is so well spoken of in the Text, and pray'd (as I hope we All do very heartily) that God would add thousands and ten thousands to his Order; I come to prove,

In the Second Place, that the goodness of such a Man's nature, and the bounty of his heart and hand, are always to be govern'd by Discretion. And this is a truth which needs no laborious proof.

For, *First*, without Prudence, the circumstances of Charity cannot be measur'd and limited with judicious † estimation and allotment. For there are Givers of different abilities, and there

† LXX. τὸ κρίσει. Gejer. in Loc. *judiciose*.

there are Receivers, whose Needs are different, and whose Merits are unequal. And the same kind of Alms, and the same measures are not, at all times, proper to be given or received by the same Persons. And therefore, it is necessary that Men be furnish'd with discretion, by which they may be qualifi'd for the due œconomy * of their Alms, and disposed to be *good* (or useful) *Stewards of the manifold grace* † (or temporal liberality) *of God.*

* LXX. Οἰκονομίαν. † 1 Pet. 4. 10. χάρισμα. Comp. v. 9, 11.

Now (*Secondly*) unless our Charity be judiciously weigh'd and proportion'd, three great inconveniencies will attend it.

For (*First*) without such judicious estimation, our Charity will be, often, ridiculous and indecent. Hence many have given humorous Alms, and conceited Legacies, and have made Statutes relishing of Monkish Caprice; and written *Folly*, in very legible Characters, upon the Front of their Foundations. Hence some, whose devotion ha's had Ignorance for its Mother, have built Two Churches in the same *Inclosure* in a small Village; endaging

maging the publick ſervice of God by dividing the Aſſembly. Hence a Man otherwiſe of no ordinary Figure in the Engliſh Chronicle *, is ſaid to have reſolved to increaſe his forty ſeven *Monaſteries* to the number of fifty, becauſe that was the number of the year of *Jubilee*. A reaſon derived from no deeper Cauſe than the pleaſure which the chime of thoſe agreeing numbers made in his weak imagination.

* K. Edg. vid. Hiſt. of Ref. part 1. p. 22.

Secondly; unleſs Diſcretion adjuſteth and proportioneth our Alms, we ſhall do leſs good with them than is in our power. Good is to be done; and every degree of Good is Good. And though a Man is not obliged to do always that which, in the abſtracted ſpeculation of it, is beſt; yet true Philoſophy, as well as Theology ſeemeth to aſſure us, that *there are no ſuch things as Moral Counſels which are not alſo Commands*: And that every Man is bound to do whatſoever is, in his Circumſtances, beſt to be done by him, and eaſily underſtood by him, to be beſt. Now how dwelleth the love of God and goodneſs in that Man, who, when he may do a *greater good*, do's irrationally

irrationally chuſe to do a *leſs*, by a careleſs and indiſcriminating Liberality? There is a certain proportion of needs and proviſions, in the World. And, in many places of it, the proviſions do ſcarce ballance the needs. Wherefore, there is cogent reaſon for the making of our Charity go as far as it can. And if it is to be done for the beſt, Diſcretion muſt guide us in the performance. For what Harveſt can we expect from that precious ſeed of Alms, which is either thrown on an heap, or ſcattered at all adventures, and in ſuch ſort, that the cultivated Land is not diſtinguiſhed from the fallow and unbroken; that the very Rocks and High-ways are ſown; and that the Birds of Prey devour that which ought to have been committed to the good ground, and to have taken root there, and to have ſprung up, from thence, for the ſuſtenance of Man's indigent Nature?

I ſhould offend againſt manifeſt Truth, if I ſhould ſay, that no good can be done by indiſcreet Alms: For good is, often, done by prodigality it

self, of which some spoils, accidentally, fall to the lot of the wise and sober. But, *the greater the prudence, the greater the good.* And it is with Alms as with Estates, where half of the Riches do's consist in the discretion of the Owner. A Judicious Man will serve more good purposes with a few pence, than an imprudent Man with a great number of Talents. We see it daily, that a competent Revenue, by good management and God's blessing, supporteth divers Families, and divers Societies founded by Charity, in very decent and comfortable manner. And S. *Chrysostome* † reporteth concerning the Church of *Antioch*, That, in his time, the small Revenue of it, well apply'd, did maintain three thousand Widows and Virgins, besides the Clergy, the Prisoners, the Strangers, the Lepers. On the other hand, it cannot escape our most negligent observation, that there are some single Persons [some did I say? Would God they were to be easily numbred] who have had greater abundance in this World than many Families, and publick Foundations. And yet, by Imprudence, and by Vice (Vice which is the greatest of Indiscretions)

† S. Chrys. Hom. 67. in S. Matt.

cretions) they have consumed the very stock, and outliv'd all but the miserable remembrance of their former plenty, and the brutish abuse of it. And yet, it may be, they never did one worthy deed, nor enjoy'd themselves as Men of Honour and Condition, nor satisfi'd many of the most just Debts: I mean such as have been due either for faithful service, or for the conveniences of life.

Thirdly, without judicious estimation, we shall do real dammage with our Alms; and inverting the method of the All-wise God (which the same God forbid) we shall *bring Evil out of Good*. By not distinguishing aright of Persons, and their needs; we shall encourage Vice, instead of relieving Poverty. We shall imitate sensual Men who consider only the craving of the vitiated Appetite, and not the real health of the Body. For instead of supporting, according to our power and skill, the just necessities of the Commonwealth; we shall be tempted, by giving ear to the clamorous importunities of the idle, the vicious, the hypocritical, to nourish the Plagues and feed the Diseases of it.

By these means we shall make it necessary for us to repeat this Prayer (for which there is too frequent cause; though, I fear, it is very rarely used) 'God forgive me the prodigality of 'my Alms, God forgive me the indis-'cretion of my Charity.

The necessity of Prudence in conjunction with Charity being thus, in more general manner, evinced; I proceed,

In the third place, To the more particular rules and measures of Religious Discretion in relation to Alms. These (I think) may be comprehended under the two following *heads*:

First, Discretion in providing, preserving, or increasing wealth; that we may have ability to do good.

Secondly, Discretion in dispensing of it, that we may do it to the best and wisest purposes.

First, The prudence of Charity consisteth in that Discretion which provideth, preserveth, increaseth wealth, that we may have ability to do good,

good, and to continue in doing of it, and in bearing of such useful fruit until we die. It is the care of every good Man to be rather helpful than burthensome. There will be always enow unavoidable necessities: And, therefore, he who wilfully createth more, is an unjust Usurper upon the substance of the Rich, and an uncharitable diminisher of the Alms of the Poor.

Now, towards the making of our fortune, religious Prudence prescribeth such means as these:

To begin with God, praying for direction and success to that Governour of the World, to whom, after all our planting and watering, we owe the increase. To furnish our selves with competent skill in the affairs we undertake. To be diligent in them without anxiety, which interrupteth the steddy thoughts of Prudence, and hangeth weights upon business. To use the conversation of a few familiar Friends; and of such as may not rob us of our time, our substance, our innocence. To Account accurately, and often. Not to esteem it a point of dishonour to examine the reckonings

of impoſing and unreaſonable Men. Not to think it unworthy of us to bargain ſometimes (as do the Politeſt of people, the *Italians*) for our Food and our Raiment. To cut off all vain and unneceſſary, and much more all diſſolute, Expence. Not to engage in equal charge with perſons of ſuperior condition and fortune. Not to go to the utmoſt criticiſm in Modes. Not to be *Trimalchio*'s and Artifts in Luxury. Not to pamper Beaſts, and ſtarve Chriſtians. To do as much with our own hands as decency, ability, and innocent diverſion, will allow us. To have, as much as may be, upon our own matters, our *own Eye*, which is that auſpicious Star that ripeneth buſineſs by its influence, and maketh it thrive and proſper. Finally, The way to advance our ſelves in all our Dealings, is, in all of them, to be juſt and honeſt. And this was the rule even of that late Philoſopher * who has, I hope, been free from the crime, but not from the ſuſpicion of Atheiſm.

But I enlarge my ſelf (I believe) too too copiouſly upon this ſubject, whilſt I ſpeak to many who underſtand the world with ſuch judicious inſight. So

* Ren. des Cartes in Epiſt. par. 1. p. 97. —— Sitq; apud me axioma, Juſtas & honeſtas vias omnium utiliſſimas eſſe, & tutiſſimas.

So that, by the purſuit of ſuch an Argument, I may ſeem, as it were, to utter Proverbs before *Solomon*.

Being now, by ſuch means as have been mention'd, and by the bleſſing of God upon them, made competently able; It is our wiſdom to raiſe and maintain (as in the Church † a publick, ſo in our Cloſet) a *private bank of Charity*, by laying aſide a convenient ſhare of our worldly Incomes for ſo worthy a purpoſe. It will grow inſenſibly: the Oyl will riſe in ſurprizing manner in the Cruiſe. And this being done, we ſhall then not be to ſeek for Alms upon ſudden and emergent occaſions; we ſhall have a ſtore for daily needs; we ſhall be unwilling to alienate or to imbezzle that which we have devoted to ſo laudable, ſo ſacred an uſe; we ſhall always give with chearfulneſs, having by us a ſtock deſigned to no other end than that of Charity: So neceſſary towards the furniture of a Religious Cloſet, where a Man's circumſtances can allow it, is a private *Corban*.

† a V. Tertul. Apol. C. 39. p. 31. Etiam ſi quod Arcæ genus, &c.

Diſcretion having, thus, in ſome meaſure either made or continued Proviſion for Alms; there is great need

(*In*

(*In the Second place*) of its further Care in the diſtribution and wiſe application of it, that Charity may attain its bleſſed Ends.

Now Diſcretion, in diſtributing of Alms, hath due regard to "*The Scope*, "*the Objects*, *the Place*, *the Seaſon*, *the* "*Quality*, *the Meaſure and Proportion of* "*this material Charity*; *and to the* "*Manner of its Conveyance.*

Firſt, Prudence hath due regard to the *ſcope* of Charity, a failure in which, is an error in the foundation. For that which is given without reſpect to the Glory of God who gave us all, and to the relief of real needs in humane Societies, is expence indeed, but it is not Charity. It is Wealth Expoſed, but not Beſtow'd. And when we give for no worthier End than the ſerving our Humour, Pride, and Vanity, it is not at all probable that we ſhall place our Alms upon the moſt deſerving. For, The bold, the talkative, the clamorous, the frequenters of publick places, will then be judged the fitteſt Inſtruments to blazon our praiſe, and to flatter our hypocriſie. If our ſcope be the ſake of God and

and the common good, that will direct us in the due application of our Alms to a purpose so fit to be our aim.

There is great boast made of Alms in the Romish Church. They sound the Trumpet of them perpetually in our Ears. But what is the End to which a great part of this Charity tendeth? Frequently the motive which perswades them is extreamly selfish, and the means they use are extravagantly indiscreet. The scope they too often vainly aim at, is *The blessing of a presumed Saint* who is ignorant of them; *Security* from the external force of *evil Spirits* by the charms and spells of Monkish Conjuration, (A sort of Ecclesiastical Magick which those very Spirits invent and incourage); Avoidance of those causeless *Curses* and *Anathema's* which are with terror denounced from their seven hill'd counterfeit *Sinai*; preservation from, or deliverance out of, the imaginary flames of *Purgatory*, blown on purpose by the Jesuitick breath for the melting of the treasures of credulous people; *Canonization*, as scandalous as it is chargeable, and performed in such

such manner, that, according to the note of *Cardinal Bessarion*, the making of their new *Saints*, doth move some sceptical men to question the *old ones*. Nay, sometimes, the scope is that very wicked one of compounding with Heaven, by their liberal Alms for their unforsaken sins: and here in this Nation (whilst the Island was enchanted with Popery) there were granted Indulgences even for what they call deadly Sins for many thousands of years to come (*a*).

† Horæ B. M. V. ad Us. Sar. fol. 66. -- who that devoutly say [these three Prayers] shall obtain ten hundred thousand years of pardon for *deadly sins* granted by our holy Father *John* 22d P. of R.

(*a*) See the vindication of this passage from the foul misrepresentation of it by two Romanists, after p. 38. of the late Book entituled, *An Apology for the Pulpits*. In that Vindication are mention'd several Indulgences; to which this following one, upon a Brass plate fixed in a Chapel in *Macclesfield* belonging to the R. H. *Thomas* Earl *Rivers*, may be added.

The pardon for saying of a paier nosters & aves and a creed is xxvi thousand yeers & xxvi dayes of pardon.

Orate pro animabus Rogeri Legh et Elizabeth uxoris sue. qui quidem Rogerus obijt IIII° die Novembris A° Dni. *MV. VI.* Elizabeth vero obijt V° die Octobris A° Dni. *MCCCC. LXXXIX.* quorum animabus propitietur deus.

The

The Event is, The alienation of Alms from their proper uſes, the increaſe of Superſtition, and the maintaining of an univerſal Uſurper. For the Pence of St. *Peter* conduced to the buying of ſuch a yoke as neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear.

The things they purchaſe as conducive to theſe ends, are the wares of dark impoſture; namely ſuch as theſe: *Shrines*, *Images*, *Lamps*, *Incenſe*, *Holy-water*, *Agnus Dei's*, *Bleſſed Grains*, *Roſes*, *Pebles*, *Rings*, *Beads*, *Reliques*, *Pardons*, *Maſſes*, *Dirige's and Soul-obits*; the goodly Inventory of Superſtition.

Bleſſed God! what a miſerable and irrational waſte is this? what great good might have been done by the wealth laid out upon ſuch unprofitable and ſuch dangerous Toys, with the prophane Merchandizers in the Romiſh Temple? how many real neceſſities might have been ſupplied by the many hundreds of pounds yearly offer'd at that one *Shrine* of the pretended *Martyr of Canterbury*? how many hungry perſons might have been fed; how many good men, bound in miſery

fery and iron, might have been se
at Liberty by such Popish indiscree
Alms, squandred so fruitlesly, an
levell'd at a Scope to which Christian
ty did never direct?

Secondly, Discretion duly consider
eth the proper *Objects* of Christian
Charity; that Dogs may not devou
the bread of Children.

The Objects which I shall speak of,
are,

First, those more *Publick ones* o
common Societies and charitabl
Foundations.

Secondly, those more *Private ones* o
particular Families and persons.

First, touching those more Publick
Objects, Societies founded by Cha
rity; I shall, at present, make onl
these few Reflections upon them.

First, I observe (which is obviou
enough) that it is an imprudent an
irreligious Liberality, which erecteth
such Publick Houses and Societies, a
please private Imagination, but dis
serve the Publick Interest. Tru
Charity erecteth not such *Sanctuaries*
as are too common in Romish Coun
tries; such as are Refuges for wilfu
and capital Malefactors. It founded

no

not such *Monasteries* as are Nurseries of a blind and formal way of worship: A kind of worship so very ritual, that the intention of the mind (unless it be of his who officiates) is the least part of it. It favoureth not such *Convents* as receive, for term of life, the young, the strong, the able and apt for business, even against the desires, endeavours, importunities of their Parents, under pretence of teaching them to serve God with greater perfection. The Romanists frequently object to us that *Statute* which was made, in the *Queens* time, in favour of the Poor: and they reproach us in a Proverb, saying, that *begging began with Protestancy*. But they should do well to use less partiality in their Censures, and to consider this plain truth, that the indiscretion of the *Monasticks* (by feeding the slothful, the superstitious, the Enthusiastick, the Fryars Mendicants, the Pilgrims or loytering wanderers of that Church) provided Objects of burthen and expence, for those of the Reformation. And who (I beseech you) were most in fault, those who *bred* the Beggars; or those, who, finding them in great necessities, made

made a Law to keep them that they might not perish?

Lastly (not to spare our selves where there is a failure) true Charity do's not countenance such *places of exemption*, as, by their private priviledge, do not support the Government by supporting the necessary Officers of State and Justice, in honour and without disturbance: such places into which the Law ha's reason to enter, yet (which is matter of just astonishment) no legal Authority.

Secondly, I observe, that it is much more probable that the publick Charities of the *Reformed* should serve the publick Interest, than those of the *Roman* Faction. Among the truly Reformed, such Societies are founded upon the impulse of plain, and prudent, and rational Causes. To wit, that God may have a publick, reasonable service offered to him. That Children may be educated for Offices Ecclesiastical, Civil, Military, Mechanick. That Offenders may be corrected, or secured. That the idle may be employed. That the aged, the impotent, the wounded, the sick,

the

the distracted; may have relief, shelter, cure and oversight.

But in the Church of *Rome*, the first motive to many Foundations is some pretended Vision or Revelation from God or a Saint. And by this means it comes to pass that sometimes fraud is a founder, and hysterick vapour (passing for Oracle) a Benefactor. And in such Places Enthusiasm is dutifully nursed and fed by those Societies, which owe to it their birth and original. The occasion of them is fanciful, and the scope of them is an indiscreet (not to say an Idolatrous) end. Thus it came to pass in the several Houses of their celebrated S. *Teresa* the *Foundress of the Reformation of the discalced Carmelites.* I will give you her own words * with respect to her first Foundation of the Monastery of *Avila*. "One day (saith *Teresa*) "after I had communicated, "our Lord strictly charg'd me to set "about this Foundation with all my "might, making me great promises, "that the Monastery should not fail "to be erected; that his divine Ma"jesty should be very much served in "it: that it should bear the title of "S. *Joseph*, who should stand at one

* Life of S. *Teresa*. 2d. part. p. 2, 3.

" Gate for our Guard, and our Lady,
" the glorious Virgin his Mother, at the
" other; and that himself would stand
" always in our Company.——That
" I should tell my Confessor this, which
" his Majesty had enjoined me; and
" that he willed him not to oppose or
" hinder me at all.

You see what Hay and Stubble is at the bottom of such buildings: and therefore, if the superstructure be solid, and it be advanced and perfected by that great moral Architect, Prudence, it is a miracle scarce inferiour to any which their *Legends* have fitted to the wide swallow of their people. But if Discretion does not succeed *Enthusiasm*, and correct it, what aids can be given, by so irregular and extravagant a Principle, to the common good?

Thirdly, It may at least be *offered* to consideration, whether Prudence would not judge it conducive to the publick interest, both of Religion and Civil order, if there were *places of retirement*, rightly constituted (without Masses, Images, Litanies to Saints, Cords of discipline, or any other instruments of Superstition) for the use of Men of *less sound temper*, though their dis-

ease

ease be not perfect distraction. These (one would imagine) might be fit retreats for the pensive, the melancholy, the male-content, the inordinately scrupulous, the fearful, the reserved, the musing, the indiscreetly zealous, the fierce disputers of this World; the vain janglers, who disturb peace and entangle truth: in summ, for the many who are not qualify'd for dispatch of business, or for freedom of conversation. By this means, pensiveness might be chang'd into godly sorrow; and discontent at the World, into self-denial; and that Religious fury which now rageth in the very streets, into private Devotion.

But I say this with submission, and not with assurance: As also that there is a publick Charity in nature and dignity before this; a due support of God's publick service in all places of this Kingdom by such a maintenance as is not scandalous and insufficient. And thus far, ever since there was a prize put into publick hands at the dissolution of superstitious Houses, there has been part of a debt due from the *State* unto the *Church*; which God grant it may have ability and opportunity,

and religious inclination to discharge.

Lastly, I cannot but take notice, upon this solemn memorial of your publick Charities, of that singular Prudence which do's appear both in the founding, and in the managing, of the *Hospitals* of this illustrious *City*. The good Ends to which they were so wisely design'd, and the diligent, prudent, and successful pursuance of those ends, ought not to be passed by with supine and ungrateful inadvertence.

In this past year, there have been put forth *Apprentices*, and discharged out of *Christ's Hospital*, *Seventy six* Children. There remain, under the care of it, *five hundred forty seven*. And the number taken in, since the erection of it, has been about *Twelve Thousand*, of which many have proved eminent in divers Faculties, and in Offices Sacred and Civil, and arriv'd at great things from very low beginnings. Ten of the foremention'd Children have been, this year, placed out to Masters of Ships, having first been educated in the Arts of *Arithmetick* and *Navigation* by the Royal bounty of his most *Excellent Majesty*, whose great and wise example ought highly to be honoured,

noured, and diligently to be purſu'd by the people of this Iſland, which God and Nature have deſign'd, by its ſituation, for Sea-affairs; I had almoſt ſaid, for the ſoveraignty of the Ocean.

There have been Cured, this laſt year, in the *Hoſpital* of St. *Bartholomew*, nigh *Sixteen Hundred* perſons, of which many were partakers, alſo, of other reliet convenient for them.

The like Charity has been extended to more than *Eighteen hundred* in the *Hoſpital* of St. *Thomas*.

There have been received into the *Hoſpital* of *Bridewell* nigh *Nine Hundred* perſons fit to be diſciplin'd into good manners. And it hath brought up, in divers Arts and Trades, no leſs than *One Hundred twenty eight*. And all this has been done, notwithſtanding theſe *Foundations* have, ſo deeply, ſuffer'd by the dreadful calamity of *Fire*; the remainder of whoſe rage, God in mercy, reſtrain; that this great *City* may never mourn a ſecond time ſiteing in Aſhes; unleſs it be in thoſe of Humiliation.

I ought not, here, to forget the *Hoſpital* of *Bethlem*, that ſanctuary of unſound Minds, dwelling unhappily in

in unsound Bodies. It hath, this year, received *fifty three* persons distempered in their imaginations. It hath Cured of Lunacy, and discharged *Forty one*; and it maintaineth under Cure a *Hundred and ten*; notwithstanding that great burthen of debt there is upon it, by reason of that noble and commodious structure lately erected.

Happy the miserable who partake of this Charity; more happy they, who out of hearty love to God and Man, have raised the several funds of it: as also they who, with pious liberality, build further upon them.

But I forbear to discourse more at large, concerning such publick Charities, in this place, where it appeareth, by the fruits of the management, that they are so well understood, and so prudently governed.

I pass to the

Second sort of charitable Objects, those more private ones of miserable Families, or Persons. And here, Discretion considereth that these words of the Lord Jesus *[*give to him that asketh*] are, by the Laws of reason, and by other pious Rules in Holy Scripture, to be, thus, expounded. "Be charitable

*S. Matt. 5. 42.

"table to every one, even to those "who have done thee injury, if thou "judgest, in *general*, that they are fit "Objects; and, in *special*, that they "are proper Objects of *thy* Alms. No Man is, by the most luxuriant growth of Riches, made all-sufficient. The needs of a small Precinct in the World will soon exhaust even the Rich Man of *Crassus*, who would not reckon any one in that number, who was not able to maintain an Army. Seeing, then, we cannot benefit all the World by our Alms, (though we may do it by our charitable Prayers for them;) it is fit that the little portion, which we are masters of, be placed upon those, whose circumstances are best suited to our own. Objects so particularly fit, are those in our Church, our Family, our Neighbourhood; in the places of our Birth, our Baptism, our Education, our Office, our Revenue, our spiritual Assistance, our temporal Deliverance or Advancement.

Amongst these Objects fitted to our personal circumstance, Discretion encourageth those only who are likewise fitted for our Charity by their own just qualifications.

Prudence,

Prudence, therefore, discountenanceth those who are *irreligious and prophane*, and never use the Name of Christ with shew of reverence, but when they ask an Alms with it: who will not follow Christ unless there be Loaves to tempt them. It discourageth those who have been *early Beggars*, and have sacrificed the very flowre and strength of their Age to idleness: Who, being accustomed to sloth, are more reconciled to shameful Poverty than honest Labour. Who tell us, falsly and absurdly, that it is as good to be idle for nothing, as to work for nothing. As if there were not *profit in all labour:* As if sloth did not disable both mind and body: As if the meer employing of our time with diligence, did not secure us from many temptations. And certainly none have fallen into more, and into more perilous snares, than they who, from the beginning, have troden the ways of unmanly lazineſs and unjust begging.

Again, Prudence giveth no countenance to the *over confident*, who stand in need of such discipline as may humble them into a deeper and more becoming sense of their miserable and low

low condition; whose impudence, adding menaces to their intreaties, giveth us cause to suspect concerning them, that they would extort those Alms by force (were it in their power) which now they endeavour to wrest by their boldness from timerous men, and from the easie-natured by their importunity.

Likewise, discretion repulseth the *craving and unsatisfy'd*, who must have benefits cover'd daily with benefits, or else a shower of their imprecations will find passage through them. These would monopolize Charity, as if *they* were the only objects on Earth; as if the comfortable dew of it were not well directed, if a drop of it fell besides their private fleece.

It discourageth, also, the *dissolute and riotous* *, who turn the Alms of the day, into the revels of the night: who are not easie 'till by expensive intemperance they have unburthen'd themselves of the little stock they have gathered.

* Tertul. Apol. c. 37. pag. 31. *Hæc quasi depositæ pietatis sunt; nam inde non epulis, nec poculis, nec ingratis voluptatibus dispensatur; sed egenis alendis humandisque, & pueris ac puellis re ac parentibus destitutis, jamq; domesticis senibus, item naufragis: & siqui in metallis, & siqui in insulis vel in Custodiis, duntaxat ex causa Dei sectæ, alumni confessionis suæ fiunt.*

thered. Amongst these, it setteth its face even against that sort of men who are, for a season, very laborious. They will, for a while, endure the heat of the day with honest and painful diligence. They will be frugal and sober 'till a summ is earned: and then it is not laid up for the support of their Family, and against they themselves fail through Impotence and Age; but the wages of some weeks are all riotously wasted in a few hours; and they use them as their thorns, which after a growth of some considerable time, make a blaze and crackling for a few moments.

Furthermore, both Religious and Civil prudence refuseth to favour *wanderers*, who are, oftentimes, pernicious spies and conveighers of unlawful Intelligence; who, in all places where they have opportunity, leave behind them the marks of their wickedness and dishonesty; who dare not lead their unwarrantable lives in any fixed abode, where the Government may take a true account of their behaviour under it.

Finally,

Finally, Discretion weighe h well the case of *pretended Converts*, lest, after the Modern *Policy of France* *, it setteth up a Market for *Conversions*, and exposeth Religion to sale in a Mercenary world, where divers will turn their Conscience to that point from whence prosperity bloweth. It is exceeding tender of all those, who, for Christs sake, quit their Countries, their Stations, their false Religion. But, if it sees any considerable spot in the Morals of such who go under this character, it fears, for the sake of the same Blessed Jesus (whose Religion is too Divine to cover base and carnal purposes) to give them encouragement. It must be a mighty love of God, and a deep sense of Christian Piety which will force a man, for mere Conscience sake, to die, as it were, whilst he is alive; to forsake the beloved Land of his Nativity, his dear Relations, his profitable employs, and to *follow Jesus whithersoever he goes*, be it to *Pilate*'s Tribunal, or to *Calvary*. Wherefore, he who pretends to have forsaken *all* that he may adhere to the Crucify'd Jesus, and leads not a life very exemplary, and of remarkable circumspection; awakens

* See *Pol.* of the *French* Clergy to destroy the Protestants, &c. p. 151, &c. p. 204, &c.

the jealousie of the Prudent, and gives them signs of his insincerity.

Thirdly, Discretion hath regard to *the place* in which Charity is fitly dispensed. *It giveth*, sometimes, very *publickly*, for Example sake, and sometimes very *privately* for Love sake, and as a sign to our selves of our freedom from vain-glory. *It hath not a constant door* for a promiscuous, bold, contentious crowd; but chuseth rather to conveigh its Alms to the houses of the needy, than to tempt them abroad daily, to the expence of their time, and modesty, and innocence; and the neglect of their Family and business.

Again, Prudence raiseth not a *great bank*, by all the Alms it hath ability to give, for the behoof of some *narrow Precinct*, whose necessities require not such redundancy of supply. That will but bring burthen, instead of maintenance. For in this sence, also, our Lords saying is true, *Where the Carcass is, there will the Eagles be gather'd together*. Prudence (to use the words of a great Man * from whom it is no shame to borrow) *distributeth the remedy as the Disease is dispersed. Greatness of relief accumulate in one place, doth rather*

* Lord *Bacon* in his Advice touching Mr. *Sutton's* Estate, in *Resusc.* p. 199.

ther invite a ſwarm and ſurcharge of poor, than relieve thoſe that are naturally bred in that place: Like to ill temper'd Medicines, that draw more humour to the part, than they evacuate from it.

Again, where Diſcretion findeth the needy actually in their miſeries, or in their labour and induſtry, there it conceiveth it hath a *fit place* offer'd to it for the depoſiting of its Alms.

For the publick Streets and Avenues to Churches, the prudent are very ſparing towards thoſe confederate and immodeſt Petitioners, who perpetually haunt them. They fear to turn their Charity into a blaze of glory. They expect little fruit from that which they ſcatter upon the ſtones. They will not be impoſed upon, or forc'd, by thoſe bold people who are, on purpoſe, importunate in ſuch publick places, where they think men will be ſham'd, at leaſt, into bounty towards them.

Fourthly, Diſcretion conſidereth the *time of giving Alms.* It hath reſpect to the ſeaſons of great Sickneſs, of great loſſes, of ſcarceneſs of Work, and of dearneſs of Proviſions. It hath eſpecial regard to diligent men juſt ſinking in

their fortune, who may, often, be kept above water by a very little help, when a hand is opportunely reached towards them. It assisteth at the beginning of *Arrests*, where timely aid delivers men from perpetual chains. It giveth as *soon* as it seeth a fit object, not suffering the Christian to pine away whilst the Charity is growing. It placeth out to Masters the *Children of the Poor*, as soon as ever they are capable of work or instruction. By such means it preventeth new Families of Beggars; it puts the Children into a capacity of being helpful to their Parents; it secures their innocence, by preventing the very beginnings of begging, which are dangerous. For there seemeth to be a kind of inchantment in that evil Trade; and few who are enter'd, are made to forsake it even by hardship it self.

Furthermore, As to time, Prudence hath an especial eye upon the *seasons* of mens *setting up* in honest Callings; giving them some place of footing where they may stand. At such times, a small summ is a greater Charity, than the liberality of the openest hand, when the

way

way of the person is more fixed, and his circumstances are ripened into some degrees of prosperity.

Likewise, Discreet charity is liberal at those *solemn times* when the Church celebrateth the Memorials of the *Birth*, the *Passion*, the *Resurrection*, the *Ascension* of the Saviour of the World; and the *descent* of the Holy *Spirit* of God: or, when it observeth publick *Fasts*; or other days of *Thanksgiving* besides those already remembred: that so our giving of Alms may be an *act* and a *sign* also, both of our humanity and our Devotion.

Again, If there be *absolute necessity*, Wisdom judgeth that time, a season for assistance, even of the personally unworthy. If it hath power, it will pull out of the ditch the perishing Goat or Swine. It knoweth that *extremity* will give violent counsel, and that men, in such circumstances, will force a way to their relief, if they cannot find one.

Last of all, Wisdom turneth not all Alms into Legacies; it doth not adjourn all its Charity to the *last Will*, which is, sometimes, never made but in a vain purpose, and, as often, not fulfill'd.

Fifthly, Discretion considereth the *quality of our Alms*. And here, it is our prudence to prefer those which serve towards a *constant* provision, before those which are *transient*: those, I mean, which help a man in a pang of need, but put him not into a *way of living*; which just hold him up from perishing, for an hour, but do not take him out of the deep waters. Wisdom, also, perswadeth always to give *suitable supplies*, and not mere counsel when bread is wanting. And it perswadeth to give such suitable supplies (if it consisteth with our convenience) rather *in kind*, than in that which will purchase them; as Clothes to the naked, and Food to the hungry, and Books to the uninstructed, and Physick to the sick. Money can answer all these needs, but it will not be always laid out upon them. And for some materials of Charity, discretion does purchase them from *Work-houses* for the poor; at the same time doubling the good, by encouraging diligence, and administring supply.

Sixthly, Discretion considereth the *due measure* and proportion of Alms, that it be fitted to the *needs* of the *receiver*,

ceiver, and to the *ability* of the *giver*.

Touching the needs of the receiver, it doth not always limit it self to mere neceſſity; but, in perſons whoſe fortunes are, by loſs and accident, in declenſion, it hath reſpect to decence; conſidering how great the fall is from Riches to Poverty. And, in men always poor, but always in hard labour, and able only to refreſh life with the continual ſweat of their brows; it pitieth the heavineſs of their yoke. It ſometimes ſweeteth their ſlaviſh eſtate by ſome addition to the wages of their drudgery; and alloweth them ſome *Sabbath* for the eaſe of humane nature.

Touching the ability of the giver, diſcretion conſidereth what we juſtly poſſeſs, and what quantity of it is required for the ſupporting of us in the condition of our birth, our place, our office, our family, and for the diſcharge of our obligations. It doth not require of all the ſame proportion. Some may afford a twentieth, and others a thirtieth part: and to others, whoſe Children and dependents are numerous, and whoſe fortunes are entangled, the hundredth part may be over mea-

meaſure. According as the heap is, ſo the wiſe man ſoweth. Religious Prudence does not pull down one Family for the ſupport of another. But for raiſing of a *new Family* to worldly grandeur (eſpecially where the heirs of it are not encouragers of our hope, either by the quickneſs of their parts, or the virtuouſneſs of their tempers, or the goodneſs of their educations) the wiſdom of charity does not preſs it with earneſtneſs. This is a deſign of no great uſe, but of great uncertainty. The Family of *Herod* † was all extinct in a ſingle Century of years. And it is noted by the Author of the *Baronage * of England*, that, of the 270 Families of which he treats, there were not, when he wrote, above *eight* remaining. And yet, a great many imprudent men live all their days in unbecoming Parſimony, and without doing good ſo much as to their ſelves, for the advancing of ſome mean man, born to labour and low eſtate, and uncapable of any thing greater than that which he is already. And ſuch a one is ruin'd by his preferment. *Galba* ſaid the honeſt truth of himſelf, when he told his Friends, That *they had*

† Joſeph. Ant. l. 18. c. 7. Et R. R. Uſſerii Annal. A. 4079.

* Sir *W. Dug.* Pref. to Vol. 1. p. 7.

ſpoil'd

ſpoil'd a good Soldier, and made the worſt of Emperours.

Laſtly, Diſcretion hath regard to the due *manner* of diſpenſing Charity; obliging both by *what* it gives, and by *the way of giving*. It giveth *not grudgingly, or of neceſſity*; but with ſigns of a free and willing heart. It findeth out, privately, juſt needs, and it preventeth asking, and ſurprizeth with a kindneſs, for which the needy did not look. And this ſtrengthens their faith in the Providence of God, who createth friends to them out of the duſt; who bringeth them ſupply without and beyond their expectation. Wherefore when Prudence giveth, it doth it without malicious upbraiding or proud inſulting. When a miſerable creature *would borrow* [or beg] *of him, it turneth not him away* *. That is, it does not remove him to a diſtance, with ſigns of diſdain, and contemptuous violence. It oppreſſeth not the modeſty of the humble; eſpecially of thoſe who have been wont to give, and not to receive. To the more confident it giveth with a mixture of governance and favour, that they neither be encoura-

* St. Mat. 5. 42. Μὴ ἀποστραφῇς. i.e. Ἀ θέλοντα ἀπ' σῦ δανίσασθαι.

couraged in insolence, nor driven to desperation.

Having said all this touching the *necessity*, and the *nature*, of *discretion in giving Alms*, (and all, with reference to the further judgment and definition of a prudent man, when a particular case does lie before him;) It remaineth,

In the last place, That I exhort both *to Charity it self, and to the prudent exercise of it.*

First, I beseech you, be ye *willing to give, and glad to distribute.* Consider that power to do good, is a dangerous ability, unless we use it. Remember that it is God who giveth wealth, and that he expecteth some answerable returns of it. Live not in such inhumane manner, as if *Nabal* and *Judas* were come again into the world. Think frequently and warmly of the love of God and Jesus to you. You will not deny your crumbs to the miserable, when you thankfully call to mind that Christ gave, for you, his very flesh and his blood. Consider that, as one great end of Poverty is Patience,

Patience, ſo one great end of Wealth is Charity. Think how honourable it is to make a *preſent* to the great King of the World; And what a condeſcenſion it is in his Alſufficiency to do that good by us, which he could, ſo abundantly, do without us. Forget not that *you your ſelves are in the body*; and that you know not what calamities may fall down upon the Earth, and what relief from others you may ſtand in need of. And let this be one of your daily thoughts, that, according to your Charity, the ſentence of Doomſday will paſs upon you.

Secondly, When you give Alms, do not offer the ſacrifice of the indiſcreet, which, it ſelf, needeth atonement. Be not uncharitable by your charity. Add not to other evils, the *great grievance* of a numerous unmanag'd Poor. Remove, as far as in you lies, the reproach of a late ſharp Writer ‡, who ſays, in effect, of the people of *England*, that they generally uſe a kind of *mother-wit*; and have the generoſity to do great things, but not the diſcretion to do them *wiſely*.

‡ *J. M.* Char. p. 10.

Now

Now, that our Charity may be discreet, let us,

First, Exercise our minds with good *compass of thought*. He that regardeth only a few things, shall never arrive at Prudence. It is necessary for a man to consider his own condition, to view objects of Charity with a strict and judicious Eye, and to look round about them in all the circumstances which attend them. The imprudent behold a shew of misery, and consider no further; and, by one motive, are prodigal of those Alms, from the misapplying of which many other Arguments would have disswaded them. *Plotinus* denieth *that there is prudence in God*, meaning it of that wisdom which needeth consultation †. But it is not with man as it is with God, whose *will* is his *wisdom*. Man knoweth but few things, and cannot arrive at discretion without study. And it is worth his labour to study the art of knowing men, by inquiry and observation; that he may secure his Charity from the wiles of the fraudulent: and not be abused by fictitious needs, and deceive himself into a dan-

* Plotin. Enn. 1. l. 2. p. 11.

† Φρόνησιν μὲν δεῖ τὸ λογιζόμενον, &c.

a dangerous conceit that *he lends to the Lord*, when he gives to those who, sometimes, *put out their very Alms to Interest*. And, by degrees, a man will observe a *certain Air* in ungodly *Mendicants*, which (as great Masters as they are in the art) they cannot easily dissemble. It is, indeed, possible for the wisest and most cautious observer to be, sometimes, mistaken. But then he hath this satisfaction in his mind, that he was not accessary to the imposture: and it is certain that they who are the blindest, are the soonest misled.

But blind we shall be, and daily misled, unless, in

The second place, We avoid slothful and easie *credulity*. *Covetousness* will require, as an excuse, and as a way of saving its beloved Money, very rigid demonstration, ere it giveth. On the other hand, *credulity* will be satisfi'd without tolerable proof, and take a lewd man's *asseveration* for an *argument*. It behaveth it self towards the tales of Beggars, as it doth towards those of idle Pamphlets: Though it be, one day, grosly deceived by them, it will trust them the next that follows.

And

And where there is such blind trust, the idle will multiply petitions and pretences. They will tell them they have *suffered* deeply by *suretyship*, though they never had the credit to get into Bonds. They will profess that they have *suffered* extremely *by fire*, though they be of that number of barbarous Thieves, who will set their Neighbours house on a flame, that they may the more securely share in his goods. The credulous will be deceived by those very appearances which would undeceive them, if they would use any competent reflection, and had not a kindness for the scales on their Eyes. I mean *the naked arms and breasts of Mendicants* in sharp seasons; and their lying in the Mire, and on the Pavements, day after day. Now, what a strength of nature is this which is not injur'd by those customary seeming hardships, which would destroy the lives of many who are in sound and perfect health; and who were not bred to tenderness but labour?

Thirdly, For the administring of Charity with Prudence, it is necessary that even *piety of inclination* be directed by it. It is storied of Mr. *Fox*, the Author

Author of the *English Martyrology*, that he could deny no man who asked of him an Alms *in the name of Jesus*. His Piety is to be highly valued; but, surely, the weakness of it is not to be drawn into imitation. For multitudes use *that name*, to whom if we are liberal we offend our Saviour, who will say to them at the final judgment, *Depart from me, I know you not* [*or will not own you as my Disciples*] *ye workers of iniquity.*

Fourthly, *Superstition* is to be removed, that Charity may have its perfect work. *In the Eastern Countries*, it feedeth Dogs, and other such Creatures, with provisions much more convenient for men; conceiting that it is, thereby, charitable to the souls of some of their departed Fore-fathers, which are wander'd into the bodies of those beasts. In those, and in *divers other parts of the world*, it erecteth Convents for *Will-worship*; and fixeth *Romish Emissaries* in such *Posts*, that they may give disturbance to Reformed Christendom. In summ, it can do nothing discreetly, being the issue of reverence overstrained, and of devout imagination heated into madness.

Fiftbly, That Charity may be prudent, let us avoid all *pride* of heart which dealeth out the measures of it to the unqualified and unworthy. It would buy off the clamour of *their* tongues, whose credit is so low that it can give no authority to their slanders. It fears the *calumny* of *penuriousness*, which will not *stick* long upon any Man, who is not sparing in any other case, where he may be *justly liberal*, and not prostitute his Riches. It would bribe the mercenary throats of vile people, into the flattering sounds of, *good Man*, *brave House-keeper*, and *bountiful Master*. *Wretched Ambition*, which loveth the praise of licentious Mendicants, more than the suffrage of Conscience, and the praise of God!

Sixtbly, Let us arm our selves with *Christian courage*, that the menaces, and revengeful looks of the sturdy and desperate, may not affright us into a misplacing of our Alms. God will protect us in well doing against all their causeless threats and imprecations. And whether is it better, to fear the loose tongue of an ungodly man, or a dreadful thunderbolt from the just hand of Heaven?

Se-

Seventhly, Let us conquer *fooliſh pity* and irrational compaſſion. That affection is put into men by nature, to keep their reaſon from languiſhing, and not to pervert it. Yet it is daily ſuffer'd to do this diſſervice in caſes of Charity. There is doleful clamour in the *ear*, and a ſhew of extream miſery before the *eye*; and this raiſes, by mere *mechanick force*, *a pang* in the heart. And nothing maketh the impreſſion, but an appearance of ſadneſs in the object. The image of it is dreadful; but men under the dominion of paſſion, conſider not whether it be a real miſery, or a fiction, and a kind of ſpectre of Poverty. They examine not whether all this, if real, is not the effect of vice and ſloth; and whether induſtry could not ſupply thoſe needs for which their Alms are ask'd, in a *careful tone*, formed, on purpoſe, to move compaſſion. But to eaſe this preſent *pang* in their *bowels*, they give at adventure, and thereby put a thorn into their *Conſcience*. Some of the *Primitive Chriſtians* ‡, out of the abundance of their compaſſion, gave Alms unwarily to many crafty *Heathens*, who knew their weakneſs, and ſerv'd them-

‡ V. Lucian de Morte Peregrin.

themselves upon it. And by this means, those less prudent Christians increased the Riches and the power of the Enemies of their persons and their Holy Religion.

There are many who have either none of the miseries which they feign, or none which they would part with. In some, loud sighs, and deep groans, and flowing tears, and passionate complaints, are all counterfeit and artificial. And if they move *your hearts*, they have more influence upon them, than they have upon *their own*. It is said of two Beggars * who had a design upon the Charity of *Epiphanius Bishop of Salamine*; that, to move his pity, one feign'd himself dead, and the other stood weeping and mourning over him. There are many who are reconciled to very ill circumstances, as pretences to beg with. They would not part with their Ulcers, their *Scars*, their *Crutches*, lest they part with their idleness and their Alms. By such ways they extort that from the tenderness of mens hearts, which the firmness of their reason would have preserved from abuse. But, alas! This Charity which springeth from such

* Soz. Eccles. Hist. l. 7. c. 27.

such soft temper as cannot bear up against any thing that looks like Tragedy, does not deserve the name of that Grace; nor shall it have its reward. For it gives indiscreetly *for its own ease*, and not to please God in the relief of just necessities. If this foolish compassion may be called Charity, the weeping at disasters of persons in Romance, may challenge the name of Christian pity.

These means, then, let us diligently use, that the wisdom of our minds may guide the liberality of our hands.

So shall we justifie our selves to our own reason; *so* shall we best promote the common good; so shall we imitate the great and all-wise God, who *is good and does good*, and does all things *in number and weight and measure*. So shall we *provide for our selves, bags which wax not old, and lay up for our selves an enduring treasure in the Heavens*, and *find mercy in that day*, when we shall stand in the greatest need of it. Having in our life time shewn discreet compassion to the *Lazar's* who are fit objects of it, we shall, when we die, be received into the

bosom of the most blessed *Jesus*, *To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be given all Honour for ever.* Amen.

FINIS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of this Sermon, finding that many Excellent Tracts were lately come forth about the *Rule of Faith*, (such as, 1. the Discourse of the certainty of Faith in Answer to *J.S.* 2. Scripture and Tradition compared. 3. The Council of *Trent* examin'd; the first Chapter of which Book shews, that Tradition is not a Rule of Faith equal with Scripture. 4. An Answer to the Address of the Ministers of the Church of *England*, shewing that all things necessary are contained in Scripture. 5. The Preface to the Book of *Reginald Peacock* a *Romish* Bishop, who notwithstanding, wrote that Book to prove the Scripture to be the Rule of Faith.)

Did judg it fit to defer the publishing of the Tract he had prepar'd, about the *Rule of Faith*, for some time; and the rather, because that which the *Romanists* have published lately about this Argument, has by the weakness of it, confirmed many in the belief of the Protestant Rule, who were a little moved with their *Boasts*, before they had heard, and consider'd their *Arguments*.

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